

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A system for supplying information to a user about a physical location visited by the user, comprising:

a portable device adapted to be carried by a human being user, the portable device having a unique device identification code;

a reader adapted to read the device identification code of the portable device of the user in close proximity to the reader, the reader being associated with a physical location to be visited by the user and having a unique reader identification code, the reader including capability to output the device identification code of the portable device when read along with the reader identification code of the reader; and

a control center adapted to receive the device identification code and the reader identification code output by the reader, the control center adapted to supply information associated with the supplied reader identification code to a location associated with the received device identification code.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the control center associates a user supplied location to supply information with the device identification code of the portable device of the user.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the reader is adapted to output the device identification code and the reader identification code to the control center during a non-retail transaction between the user and the physical location visited by the user.

4. The system of claim 1, further comprising a store; and wherein the reader is contained within the store and the reader is adapted to read the device identification code of the portable device of the user while the user is exterior to the store.

5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a store; and wherein the reader is contained within the store and the reader is adapted to read the device identification code of the portable device of the user when the store is closed.

6. The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of readers, each of the readers having a respective reader identification code and being associated with respective elements of the physical location, each of the readers adapted to read the device

identification code of a portable device of a user in close proximity to the respective reader, and each of the readers having capability to output the read device identification code and the reader identification code of the respective reader.

7. The system of claim 1, wherein neither the portable device nor the device identification code of the portable device identify the user.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the reader is adapted to read the device identification code of the portable device of the user without the user communicating with a representative of the physical location being visited.

9. The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of readers, each of the readers having a respective reader identification code and being associated with respective elements of the physical location, each of the readers adapted to read the device identification code of a portable device of a user in close proximity to the respective reader, each of the readers having capability to output the read device identification code and the reader identification code of the respective reader, and each of the reader identification codes being associated with respective information relating to the respective elements of the physical location.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the portable device is adapted to have its device identification code be read by a plurality of the readers associated with the physical location being visited by the user.

11. The system of claim 9, wherein the portable device is adapted to have its device identification code be read by a plurality of the readers associated with the physical location during a single visit to the physical location by the user.

12. The system of claim 9, wherein each of the readers is disposed within a respective department of the physical location, and each of the reader identification codes of the readers is associated with respective information relating to the respective department.

13. The system of claim 9, wherein each of the readers is disposed adjacent to a respective item for sale in the physical location, and each of the reader identification codes of the readers is associated with respective information relating to the respective item for sale.

14. The system of claim 9, wherein each of the readers is disposed at a location accessible from an exterior to the physical location being visited.

15. The system of claim 1, further comprising a retail store disposed within a physical structure having a display window, the reader being disposed behind the display window of the retail store; and wherein the reader is adapted to read the device identification code of a portable device disposed exterior to the display window.

16. The system of claim 15, further comprising a plurality of readers disposed in respective vicinities behind the display window, each of the vicinities representing a respective department of the retail store, and each of the readers having a respective reader identification code and being associated with the respective department of the retail store.

17. The system of claim 15, further comprising a plurality of readers disposed adjacent to respective items for sale disposed behind the display window; and each of the readers having a respective reader identification code and being associated with the respective item for sale.

18. A process of supplying information relating to a visited location to a user of a portable device having a unique device identification code, comprising the steps of:
visiting by a user of a location about which information is desired;
reading the device identification code of the portable device held by the user by a reader having a unique reader identification code and associated with the location being visited by the user;
supplying to a control center the read device identification code and the reader identification code of the reader having read the device identification code; and
supplying by the control center to a location associated with the supplied device identification code information associated with the supplied reader identification code.

19. The process of claim 18, further comprising the step of identifying by the user the location associated with the device identification code.

20. The process of claim 18, wherein the step of reading the device identification code is carried out by reading the device identification code of the portable device of the user during a non-retail transaction between the user and the location visited by the user.

21. The process of claim 18, wherein the step of visiting by a user is carried out by visiting an exterior of a store; and the reading step is carried out when the visitor is exterior to the store.

22. The process of claim 18, wherein the step of visiting by a user is carried out by visiting by the user of a closed location about which information is desired; and the reading step is carried out when the location is closed.

23. The process of claim 18, wherein the step of reading is carried out by reading the device identification code of the portable device of the user by one of a plurality of readers having respective, unique reader identification codes and associated with respective elements of the location being visited by the user.

24. The process of claim 18, wherein the visiting step is carried out by visiting by the user of one of a plurality of locations; and the step of reading the device identification code is carried out by reading the device identification code of the portable device by a reader associated with the respective one of the plurality of locations visited by the user.

25. The process of claim 18, further comprising the step of supplying the portable device to the user, neither the portable device nor the device identification code of the portable device identifying the user.

26. The process of claim 18, wherein if the user loses the portable device or the portable device is stolen, no information about the user is obtained by another person possessing the portable device or by another person using the portable device.

27. The process of claim 18, wherein the steps of visiting, reading the device identification code and supplying to the control center are carried out without identifying the user to the location being visited by the user.

28. The process of claim 18, wherein the step of visiting by the user is carried out without the user communicating with a representative of the location being visited.

29. The process of claim 18, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of readers in the location being visited by the user, each of the readers having a respective reader identification code and associated with respective information.

30. The process of claim 29, wherein the step of reading the device identification code of the portable device held by the user is carried out by a plurality of the readers in the location being visited.

31. The process of claim 30, wherein the step of reading the device identification code by a plurality of readers is carried out during a single visit to the location.

32. The process of claim 29, wherein the step of providing is carried out by providing each of the plurality of readers in a respective department of the location and the information associated with each of the readers relates to the respective department.

33. The process of claim 29, wherein the step of providing is carried out by providing each of the plurality of readers adjacent to a respective item for sale in the location, and the information associated with each of the readers relates to the respective item for sale.

34. The process of claim 29, wherein the step of providing a plurality of readers is carried out by providing the readers at locations accessible from an exterior to the location being visited.

35. The process of claim 18, wherein the location being visited is a retail store disposed within a physical structure having a display window; the process further comprising the step of providing the reader in the display window; and wherein the reading step is carried out by the user placing the portable device substantially near the display window.

36. The process of claim 18, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of readers in the location being visited by the user, each of the readers having a respective reader identification code and associated with respective information; wherein the step of providing the reader in the display window is carried out by displaying each of the readers in the display window within a respective vicinity representing a respective department of the retail store, and the information associated with each of the readers relates to the respective department.

37. The process of claim 18, further comprising the step of providing a plurality of readers in the location being visited by the user, each of the readers having a respective reader identification code and associated with respective information; wherein the step of providing the reader in the display window is carried out by displaying each of the readers in

the display window adjacent to a respective item for sale, and the information associated with each of the readers relates to the respective item for sale.

38. A system for supplying information to a user about a physical location visited by the user, comprising:

a portable device adapted to be carried by a human being user, the portable device having a unique device identification code;

a reader adapted to read the device identification code of the portable device of the user in close proximity to the reader, the reader being associated with a physical location to be visited by the user and having a unique reader identification code, the reader including capability to output the device identification code of the portable device when read along with the reader identification code of the reader;

a control center adapted to receive the device identification code and the reader identification code output by the reader, the control center adapted to supply fulfillment information associated with the supplied reader identification code in accordance with a user identified type of fulfillment information to a user identified location associated with the received device identification code; and

communication means for communicating from the user to the control center the type of fulfillment information and the location to supply fulfillment information, the control center associating the communicated type of fulfillment information and the communicated location with the device identification code of the portable device of the user.

39. The system of claim 38, wherein the communicating means is adapted to communicate from the user an amount of fulfillment information to be supplied; and the control center is adapted to supply fulfillment information associated with the received reader identification code in accordance with the identified amount of fulfillment information.

40. The system of claim 38, wherein the communicating means is adapted to communicate from the user whether fulfillment information containing pictures is preferred as the type of fulfillment information; and the control center is adapted to supply fulfillment

information associated with the received reader identification code in accordance with the identified type of fulfillment information.

41. The system of claim 38, wherein the communicating means is adapted to communicate from the user whether fulfillment information containing motion video is preferred as the type of fulfillment information; and the control center is adapted to supply fulfillment information associated with the received reader identification code in accordance with the identified type of fulfillment information.

42. A process of supplying information relating to a visited location to a user of a portable device having a unique device identification code, comprising the steps of:

identifying by the user a type of fulfillment information to be supplied to the user;

identifying by the user a location to supply the fulfillment information;

visiting by a user of a location about which information is desired;

reading the device identification code of the portable device of the user by a reader having a unique reader identification code and associated with the location being visited by the user;

supplying to a control center the read device identification code and the reader identification code of the reader having read the device identification code; and

supplying by the control center to the location identified by the user fulfillment information associated with the supplied reader identification code in accordance with the type of fulfillment information identified by the user.

43. The process of claim 42, wherein the step of identifying by the user the type of fulfillment information to be supplied to the user is carried out by identifying by the user an amount of fulfillment information to be supplied; and the supplying by the control center step is carried out by supplying fulfillment information associated with the supplied reader identification code in accordance with the identified amount of fulfillment information.

44. The process of claim 42, wherein the step of identifying by the user the type of fulfillment information to be supplied to the user is carried out by identifying by the user whether fulfillment information containing pictures is preferred; and the supplying by the

control center step is carried out by supplying fulfillment information containing pictures only if preferred by the user in accordance with the identified type of fulfillment information.

45. The process of claim 42, wherein the step of identifying by the user the type of fulfillment information to be supplied to the user is carried out by identifying by the user whether fulfillment information containing motion video is preferred; and the supplying by the control center step is carried out by supplying fulfillment information containing motion video only if preferred by the user in accordance with the identified type of fulfillment information.

46. A system for supplying information to a user about a physical location visited by the user, comprising:

a portable device adapted to be carried by a human being user, the portable device having a unique device identification code;

registering means for registering the user during a registration process, the registering means including communicating means for communicating by the user identification information identifying an identity of the user and an information destination to which fulfillment information is to be supplied, the registering means associating the communicated user identification information and the information destination with the device identification code of the portable device of the user.

a reader adapted to read the device identification code of the portable device of the user in close proximity to the reader, the reader being associated with a physical location to be visited by the user and having a unique reader identification code, the reader including capability to supply as an output the device identification code of the portable device when read along with the reader identification code of the reader; and

a control center adapted to receive the device identification code and the reader identification code output by the reader, the control center adapted to supply fulfillment information associated with the supplied reader identification code to the user communicated information destination associated with the received device identification code.

47. The system of claim 46, wherein the registering means receives from the user a preferred type of delivery of the fulfillment information to the user; and the control center

supplies the fulfillment information to the information destination associated with the supplied device identification code in accordance with the preferred type of delivery.

48. The system of claim 47, wherein the type of delivery is one of electronic mail, regular mail, telephone or web-site access.

49. The system of claim 46, wherein the registering means receives from the user a second information destination to which the fulfillment information is to be supplied by the control center; and the control center supplies the fulfillment information to the second information destination associated with the supplied device identification code.

50. The system of claim 46, wherein the registering means receives from the user information identifying whether fulfillment information is to be supplied to the user periodically; and the control center supplies the fulfillment information associated with the supplied reader identification code periodically to the information destination associated with the supplied device identification code in accordance with the user supplied information identifying whether fulfillment information is to be supplied periodically.

51. The system of claim 50, wherein the control center supplies the fulfillment information periodically without notifying the physical location or an agent of the physical location.

52. The system of claim 50, wherein the registering means receives from the user anonymous preference information identifying whether the identity of the user remains anonymous to physical locations visited and agents of the physical location visited.

53. The system of claim 46, wherein the registering means receives from the user information identifying whether the user is to be placed on mailing lists of locations visited; and the control center supplies the identity of the user associated with the supplied device identification code to an agent of the physical location associated with the supplied reader identification code.

54. The system of claim 46, wherein the registering means is adapted to receive the user identification information prior to the user receiving the portable device.

55. The system of claim 46, further comprising means for distributing a plurality of portable devices to potential users on a random or pseudo-random basis, each of the portable devices having a respective unique device identification code.

56. The system of claim 46, further comprising means for distributing a plurality of portable devices at a single location, each of the portable devices having a respective unique device identification code.

57. A process of supplying information about a visited location, comprising the steps of:

registering a user during a registration process, the user supplying identification information during the registration process, the identification information including a location to which the user desires to receive information;

supplying to the user a portable device having a unique device identification code;

associating the unique device identification code of the portable device with the user supplied identification information;

visiting by the user of a location about which information is desired;

reading the device identification code of the portable device held by the user by a reader having a unique reader identification code and associated with the location being visited by the user;

supplying to a control center the read device identification code and the reader identification code of the reader having read the device identification code; and

supplying by the control center to the user supplied location to which the user desires to receive information associated with the supplied device identification code information associated with the supplied reader identification code.

58. The process of claim 57, wherein the registering step includes the user supplying a preferred type of delivery of information to be supplied to the user; and the supplying by the control center step is carried out by supplying the information associated with the supplied reader identification code in accordance with the user supplied preferred type of delivery.

59. The process of claim 58, wherein the type of delivery is one of electronic mail, regular mail, telephone or web-site access.

60. The process of claim 57, wherein the registering step includes the user supplying a second location to which the user desires information to be supplied; and the supplying by the control center step includes supplying the information associated with the supplied reader identification code to the user supplied second location.

61. The process of claim 57, wherein the registering step includes the user identifying whether information is to be supplied to the user periodically; and the supplying by the control center step is carried out by periodically supplying to the user supplied location the information associated with the supplied reader identification code.

62. The process of claim 61, wherein the supplying by the control center step is carried out without notifying the visited location about the periodic supply to the user of the information associated with the supplied reader identification code.

63. The process of claim 61, wherein the registering step includes the user identifying whether an identity of the user remains anonymous to visited locations; and the supplying by the control center step is carried out without notifying the visited location about the periodic supply to the user of the information associated with the supplied reader identification code when the user identified to remain anonymous.

64. The process of claim 57, wherein the registering step includes the user identifying whether the user is to be placed on mailing lists of visited locations; the process further comprising the steps of supplying by the control center to a location identified by the visited location an identity of the user based on the user identification information supplied during the registration process; and adding the identity of the user to a mailing list of the visited location.

65. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device to the user is carried out after the registration process is carried out in the registering step.

66. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device to the user is carried out prior to the registering step.

67. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device is carried out by supplying portable devices having respective unique device identification codes to a plurality of potential users on a random or pseudo-random basis; and the registering step is carried out by at least one of the potential users to which the portable device is supplied.

68. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device is carried out by distributing at a single location a plurality of portable devices having respective unique device identification codes to a plurality of potential users; and the registering step is carried out by at least one of the potential users to which the portable device is distributed.

69. The process of claim 57, further comprising the step of printing a code on the portable device or on material supplied with the portable device; and wherein the step of supplying the portable device is carried out prior to registration; and the registering step includes the step of the user identifying the code; the process further comprising the step of the control center identifying the device identification code of the portable device supplied to the user in accordance with the user identified portable device.

70. The process of claim 57, further comprising the step of printing a unique code different from the device identification code on the portable device or on material supplied with the portable device; and wherein the step of supplying the portable device is carried out prior to registration; and the registering step includes the step of the user identifying the code; the process further comprising the step of the control center identifying the device identification code of the portable device supplied to the user in accordance with the user identified portable device.

71. The process of claim 57, wherein the steps of visiting the location and reading by the reader are carried out prior to the registration process.

72. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device is followed by the steps of visiting the location and reading by the reader; the step of registering occurs after the reading by the reader step, and the step of supplying by the control center occurs after the registering step.

73. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device is followed by the steps of visiting the location and reading by the reader; the registering step occurs after the step of supplying to the control center; and the step of supplying by the control center occurs after the registering step.

74. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device is carried out by supplying a plurality of portable devices to a plurality of potential users, each of the portable devices including a respective device identification code; the step of registering by at least one of the potential users is carried out prior to the steps of visiting by the at least one of the potential users and the step of reading by a reader of the respective portable device held by the at least one of the potential users; and the step of registering by another of the potential users is carried out after the steps of visiting by the another of the potential users and the step of reading by a reader of the respective portable device held by the another of the potential users.

75. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device is carried out by supplying a plurality of portable devices to a plurality of potential users, each of the portable devices including a respective device identification code; the step of registering by at least one of the potential users is carried out after the at least one of the potential users receives the respective portable device during the supplying the portable device step; and the step of registering by another of the potential users is carried out before the another of the potential users receives the respective portable device during the supplying the portable device step.

76. The process of claim 57, wherein the step of supplying the portable device is carried out by supplying a plurality of portable devices to a plurality of potential users, each of the portable devices including a respective device identification code; wherein for a first group of said plurality of potential users the step of supplying the portable device is followed by the step of registering which is followed by the steps of visiting and reading by a reader; wherein for a second group, different from the first group, of said plurality of potential users the step of registering is followed by the step of supplying the portable device which is followed by the steps of visiting and reading by a reader; and wherein for a third group,

different from the first and second groups, the step of supplying the portable device is followed by the steps of visiting and reading by a reader followed by the step of registering.

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